

## The Doctrine of the Enigma of Fear

1. What the Bible teaches about fear is somewhat enigmatic. Fear as described in the Scripture by **Phobos** includes not only fear as we generally know it but the word also includes a deep abiding respect for the object of fear. There is another word translated fear and that is **Deilos** meaning cowardice or timidity.

2. The more we surrender to fear (**Deilos**), the more things we will fear. The more things we surrender to fear (**Deilos**), the greater our capacity for fear. The greater our capacity for fear (**Deilos**), the more we increase the power of fear in our life. The more we increase the power of fear (**Deilos**) in our life, the harder it becomes to grow in God's grace.

3. Fear (even **Phobos**) can be a sin or an evil in our life. There are people who fear God because they do not know Him. A mature believer, however, will never fear God in the sense of dread. Fear in the sense of dread, whether the object of the fear is God or a secular threat may be only a fleeting emotion and thus a sin. Fear, as a sin, can be handled easily, by just naming it to God and moving on. Fear, which becomes evil, is another matter; the antidote for all evil is metabolized doctrine in the soul.

4. If we let fear or dread hang around it will become evil and a terrible mental attitude sin which is both irrational and irresponsible; and thus, a terrible distraction, breeding failure and unhappiness.

5. That man should fear and respect God is an established principle. In one sense, however, as His prized possession, the regenerate man with doctrine should bask in the fact that God is our shield and our very great reward, however in another sense God is not to be mocked or tempted—His name is to be hallowed.

Gen 15:1 After his deliverance of Lot, the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, **Fear** not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

6. The fear and the dread of appearing before a Holy God are eliminated (or ought to be) in the life of a believer. Fear, as noted in point 1, is enigmatic; let me explain how you can fear God while also respecting God.

6.1 God is the creator of all things and as such He is omnipotent, sovereign and righteous. God has impeccable standards which operate in love with His omnipotence, sovereignty and righteousness.

6.2 God so loved the world says Joh 3:16 that He gave His only begotten Son that all who believe in Him will never perish but have everlasting life. However, God also has provided for our happiness and prosperity a code of conduct. He also expects submission to His will and often He even "DEMANDS IT."

6.3 Since God in His omniscience left us with volition He often must discipline us when our choices demand His heavy hand. Jonah was a grand example of choosing the wrong course and as a result he became a recipient of a large dose of “sea water” and a lasting memory of “fish breath.”

6.4 The same is true of David who lost the love of his favorite son and the temporary loss of his kingdom. Paul who lost four years of his life in prison for failing to heed God’s call to “go west young man, go west.” Well we could go on and on with tales of failures precipitating discipline. Now we can understand better C.S. Lewis’s explanation of the enigma of fear.

6.5 In his book The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe he writes of two children searching for their brother, who is under the spell of a wicked witch. They are desperate for help when they hear that the Lion King of Narnia is on the move. The Lion in his book is symbolic of Christ the God-man. The children both fear and respect the Lion King hoping He might help them, one of the children, says, "Ooh!" said Susan, "Is he safe? I feel quite nervous about meeting a lion." "Safe?" said Mr. Beaver. "Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good.' He's the King ..."

6.6 Christ as the Lion of Judah is quite the companion, strong, bold, perfect and devoted to His pride but better yet, my Christian friend, He is Good!

1Jo 4:18 There is no fear in love (**Agape**). But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

Rom 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ...  
Rom 8:33 Who will bring a charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies—of course not!

7. A fear and reverence for God is one of the requirements of a leader. It was one of the requisites given to Moses as a character requirement. Leaders may fear, but it is what they do with fear that is important.

Exo 18:21 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:

8. Discipline from the Lord is very often painful, but always perfect; it is done in love, God knows our frame and therefore provides that which is needed. Rom 8:28 compared with 1Th 5:18

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

1Th 5:18 In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

9. A believer's fear of discipline and reverential respect for God should be parlayed into a productive walk with God. God's discipline must not be feared but approached as an "opportunity to learn."

Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Heb 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Heb 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

10. Rather than fear what God has in store for us in the way of testing or discipline, we need to believe that He is our loving Father who patiently waits to provide blessing when we have capacity to enjoy tomorrow's rewards.

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Isa 30:18 And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.

11. Fear and reverence of God is an essential element in the Christian life. It is also the beginning of wisdom.

1Pe 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear (**Phobos**):

Pro 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Psa 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth forever.

Pro 9:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

12. As believers, we are told to fear the failure of moving to spiritual maturity. Israel didn't embrace the promises of God and neither did they fear Him. Israel received both national discipline and even now (though in the main unaware) they await a time of Jacob's trouble--the Tribulation.

Mat 11:21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Mat 11:22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

Jer 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

Heb 4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

Heb 4:2 For unto us was the good news of God's grace preached, as well as unto the exodus generation: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

13. Witnessing must be done with meekness and fear. In 1Pe 3:15 fear is **Phobos**, meaning respect and reverential fear. Witnessing is to be approached as serious business, and not to be done on the fly, but with gentleness, compassion, respect and a healthy fear of God.

1Pe 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with gentleness, compassion, respect and a healthy respect and reverential fear of God.

14. There will be a very real fear of God's holiness on the part of those counted among the wicked at the Lord's coming.

Isa 2:10 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.

Isa 2:11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day ...

Isa 2:19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Luk 21:25 "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;"

Luk 21:26 "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

Luk 21:27 "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

15. Christians without doctrine are anxious and fearful, as over against the mature believer who is confident and courageous.

Pro 28:1 The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

16. Though there is a place for fearing establishment, and there is a place for the fleeting emotion of fear; those who do the will of God have no reason to fear. Fear is a legitimate response to a real danger; it is built into our souls to allow an appropriate response. For example: fleeing a wild animal, avoiding a poisonous snake, etc. Paul uses fear in a figurative sense, when he speaks of his concern that there is rampant reversionism among the Corinthians.

1Co 2:3 I came to you in weakness **and fear**, and with much trembling.

2Co 11:3 But I **am afraid** that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

2Co 12:20 For **I am afraid** that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder.

2Co 12:21 I **am afraid** that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.

17. Cowardice or timidity, as in "a spirit of fear" is to be avoided. For cowardice we have **δειλος** which means pusillanimous timidity. Never is **Deilos** used in a positive way, always negative. **Deilos** appears three times in the New Testament.

Mat 8:26 He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so **afraid**?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

Mat 8:27 The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

2Ti 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of **fear**; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Rev 21:8 But the **fearful**, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

18. Fear can be a mental attitude sin; a sin that creates an anxious dread in our soul. The faith rest mechanics are designed to counter the effects of both "abnormal" and "normal fear."

1Pe 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

1Pe 5:7 **Cast all your anxiety on him** because he cares for you.

19. Overcoming fear as a dominating force in ones life comes from Bible doctrine metabolized in the soul of the believer.

Psa 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, **I will fear no evil**: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Psa 56:3 **When I am afraid**, I will trust in you.

Psa 56:11 In God I trust; **I will not be afraid**. What can man do to me?

Heb 11:27 By faith he forsook Egypt, **not fearing** the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

20. Fear should never be the motivation for our choices, but rather obedience to informed wisdom i.e., doctrine. Satan wants us to fear death; accordingly, God has provided many Scriptures urging courage.

Heb 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--  
Heb 2:15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their **fear of death**.

20.1 There is no reason for a believer to ever fear death.

Psa 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

21. The dissolution of our life on earth (death) should never be feared. John Bunyan said it this way:

"Let dissolution come when it will, it can do the Christian no harm, for it will be but a passage out of a prison into a palace, out of a sea of troubles into a haven of rest; out of a crowd of enemies to an innumerable company of true, loving, and faithful friends; out of shame, and reproach, and contempt into exceeding great and eternal glory."

22. This should be our attitude, even when we are blessed to serve our country in battle. When it is your time, you will die, and not a minute before then!

Jos 8:1 And the LORD said unto Joshua, **Fear not**, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land:

Exo 14:13 And Moses said unto the people, **Fear ye not**, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever.

Exo 14:14 The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

Deu 31:8 And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, **neither be dismayed**.

Deu 31:9 And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark ... of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel.

Isa 41:10 **Fear thou not**; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Isa 41:11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

23. The promise of Psa 4:8 helps to overcome unhealthy fear and anxiety. Fears are often magnified in the closet of the night. Nocturnal fears however, seem to shrink at dawns first light.

Psa 4:8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

Psa 34:4 I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears.

24. Solomon in his old age said "old folks" often lose their usefulness, for they are full of fear.

Ecc 12:1 Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them"--

Ecc 12:2 before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain;

Ecc 12:3 when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the grinders cease because they are few, and those looking through the windows grow dim;

Ecc 12:4 when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades; when men rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint;

Ecc 12:5 when men are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags himself along and desire no longer is stirred. Then man goes to his eternal home ...

25. For the child of God, whether young or old, we must remember there is joy in the morning, for in His service there is life abundant.

Psa 30:5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but **joy** cometh in the **morning**.